



US009232347B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Kim

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,232,347 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Jan. 5, 2016**

(54) **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PLAYING MUSIC**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal dis-
claimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/695,408**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 24, 2015**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2015/0230046 A1 Aug. 13, 2015

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/367,591, filed on
Feb. 7, 2012, now Pat. No. 9,026,049.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Feb. 7, 2011 (KR) 10-2011-0010812

(51) **Int. Cl.**
H04B 5/00 (2006.01)
H04W 4/00 (2009.01)
H04M 1/725 (2006.01)
H04W 76/02 (2009.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H04W 4/008** (2013.01); **H04B 5/00**
(2013.01); **H04M 1/7253** (2013.01); **H04M**
1/72558 (2013.01); **H04W 76/023** (2013.01);
H04M 2250/04 (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC H04M 1/72558
USPC 455/41.1, 41.2, 179.1, 205, 434, 552.1
See application file for complete search history.

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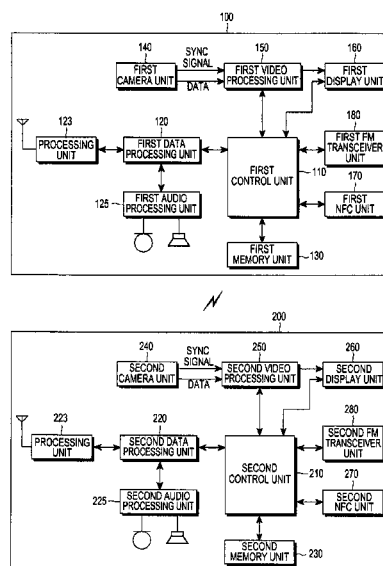
Primary Examiner — Tuan H Nguyen

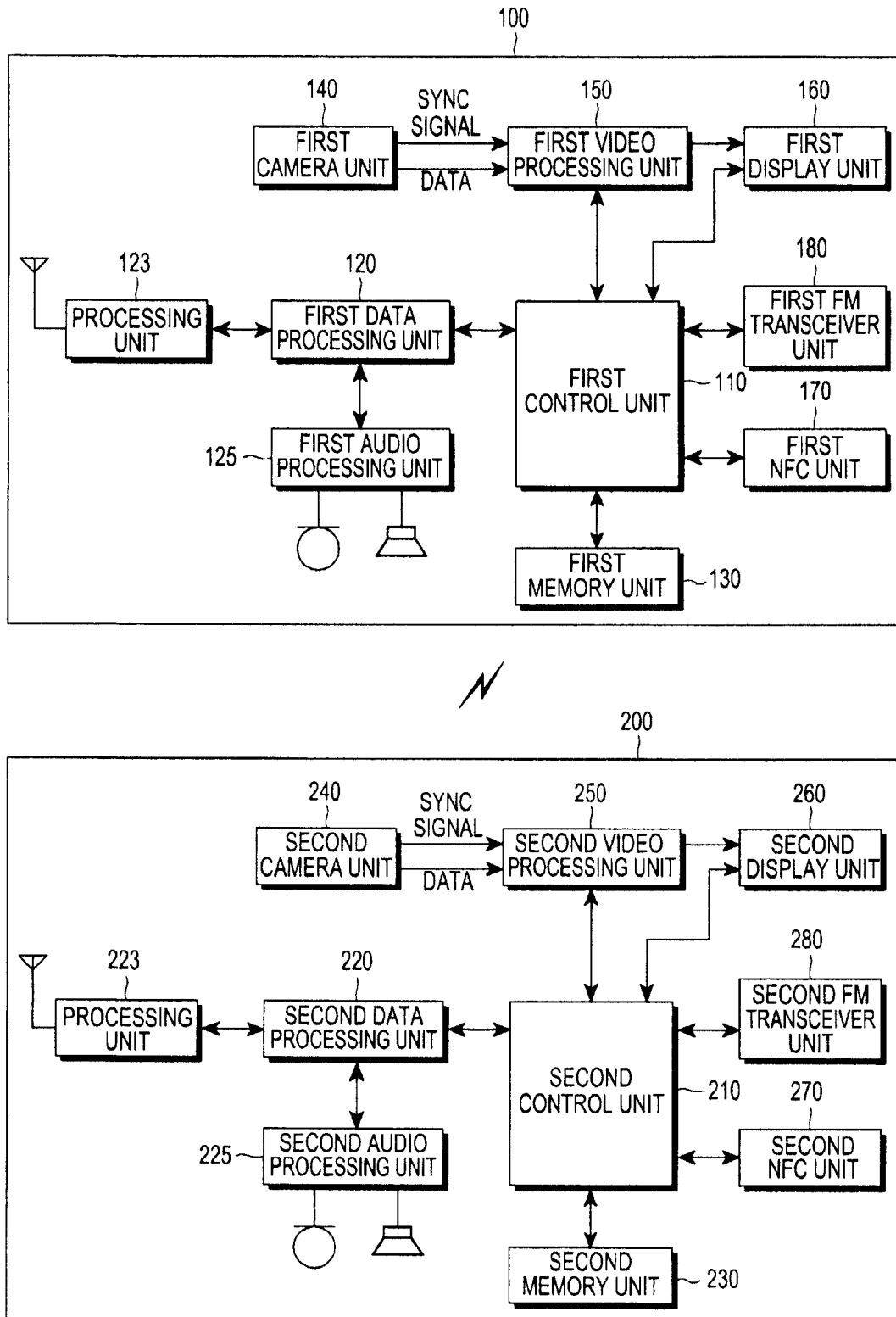
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided is an apparatus and method for playing music, which can play music by simply sharing the music with an external device. An apparatus for playing music includes a first portable terminal and a second portable terminal. The first portable terminal transmits FM channel information of an FM transmitter, which is set to broadcast in-play music thereof, and an FM radio application execution command through near field communication (NFC). The second portable terminal receives the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal through the NFC, then executes the FM radio application based on the FM channel information to receive and play the music broadcasted from the first portable terminal.

25 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets





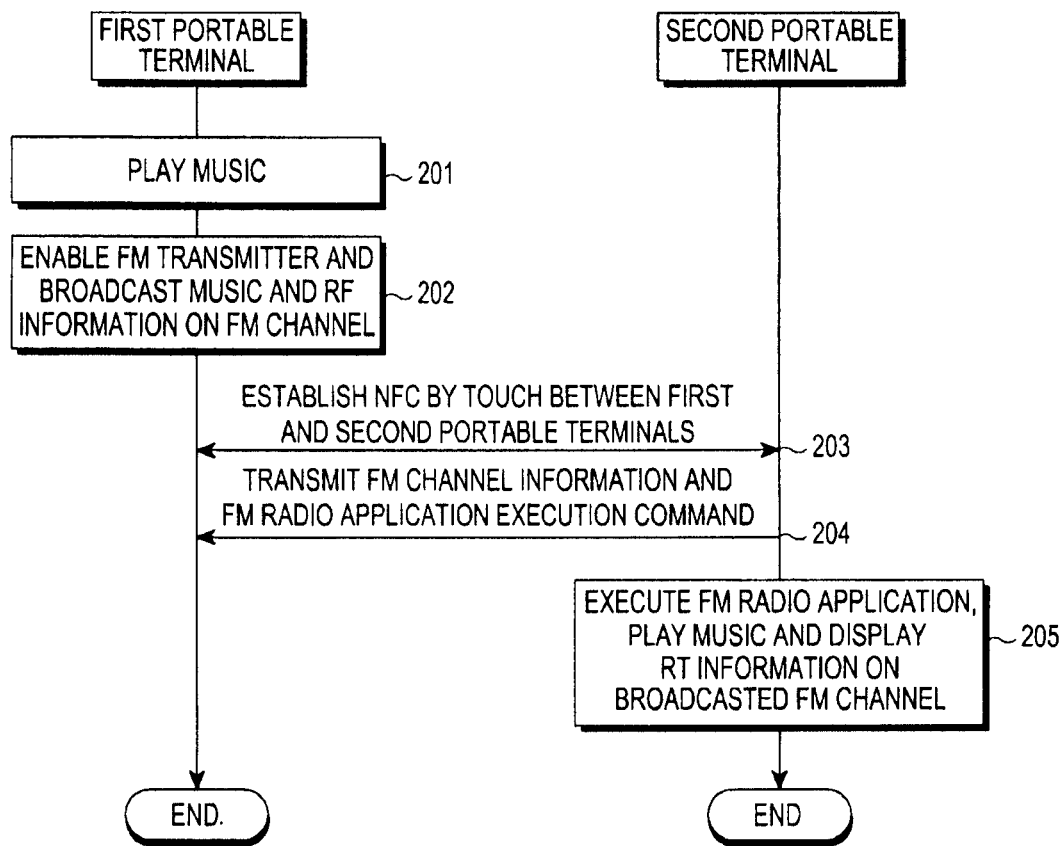


FIG.2

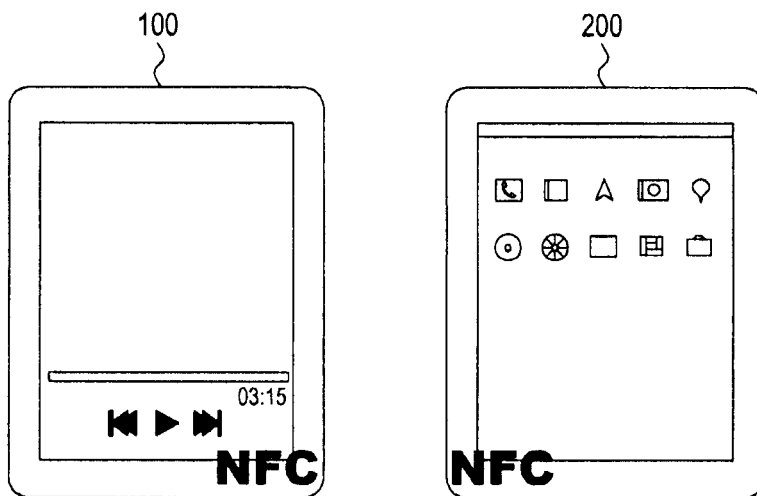


FIG. 3A

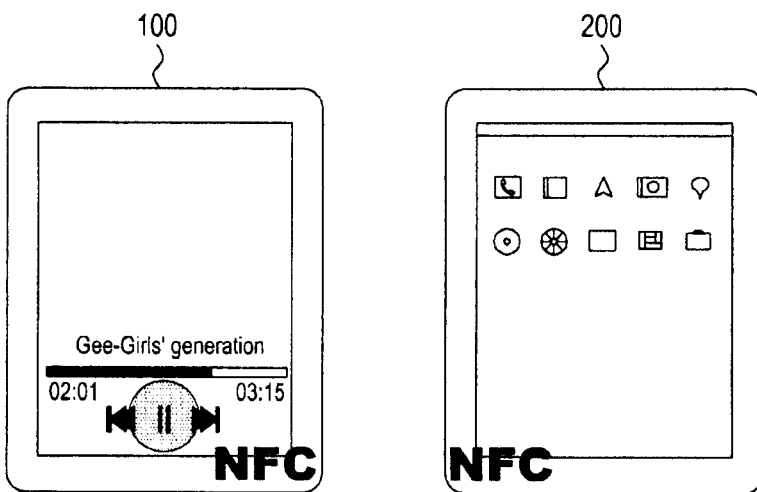


FIG. 3B

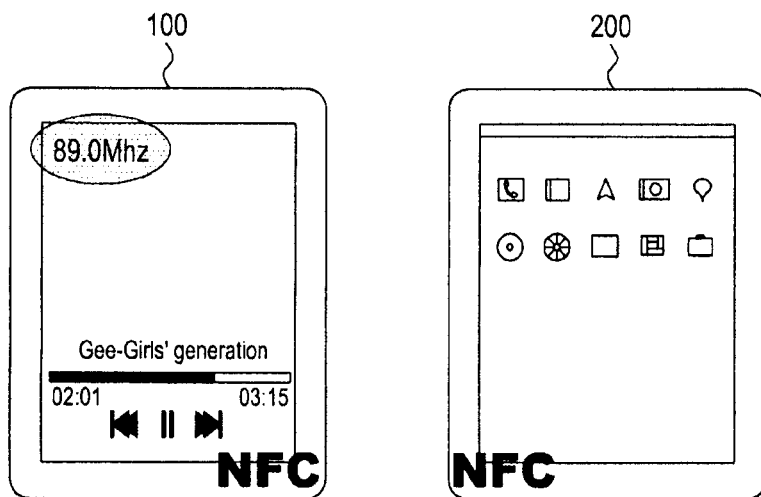


FIG. 3C

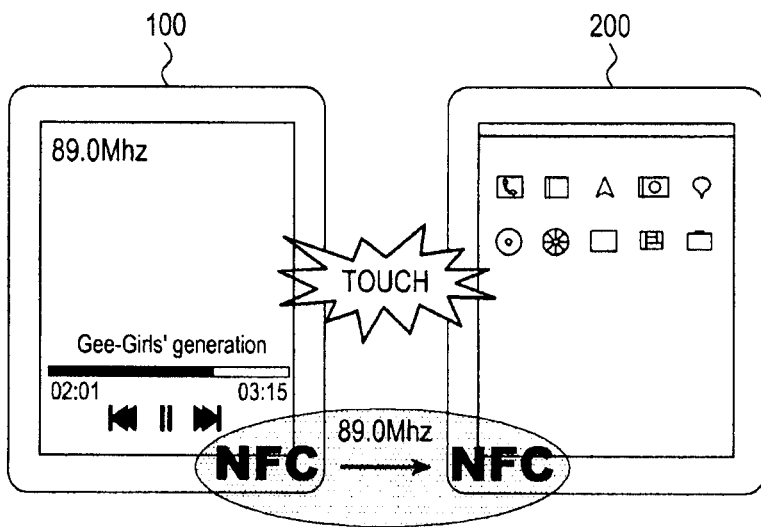


FIG. 3D

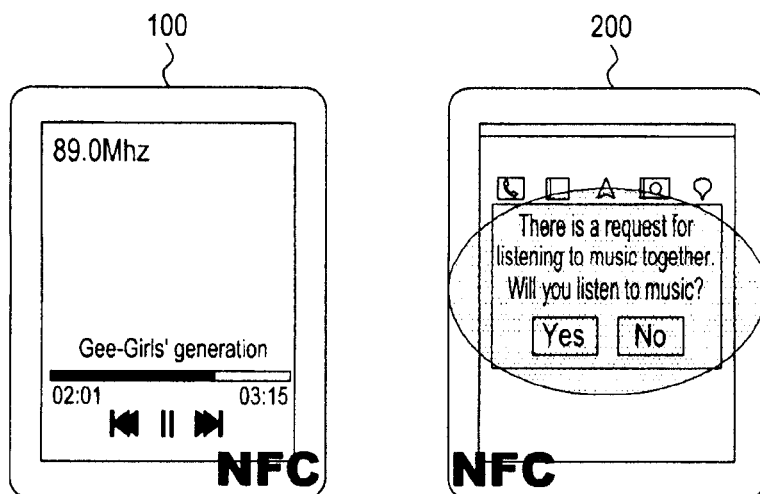


FIG. 3E

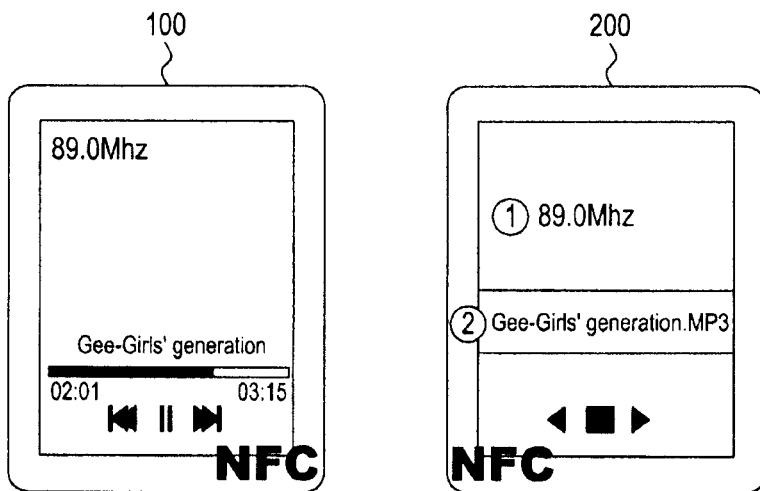


FIG. 3F

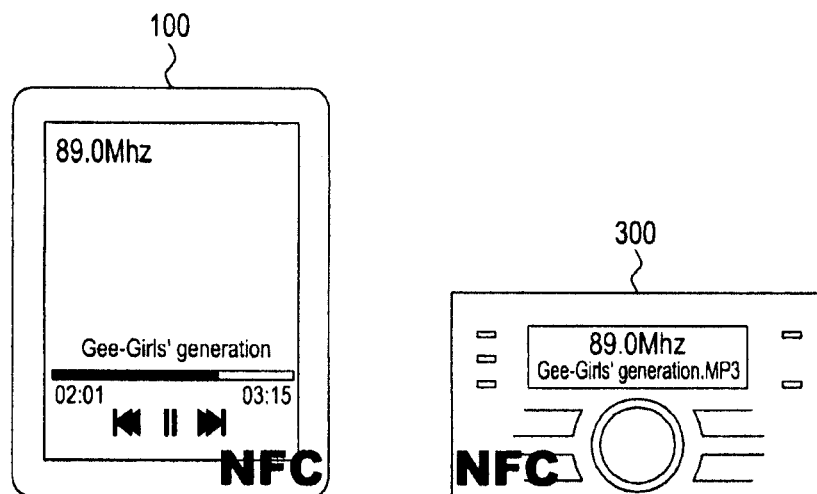


FIG. 3G

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PLAYING MUSIC

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/367,591 filed on Feb. 7, 2012 which claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119 of a Korean Patent Application filed in the Korean Intellectual Property Office on Feb. 7, 2011 and assigned Serial No. 10-2011-0010812, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to an apparatus and method for playing music, and more particularly, to an apparatus and method for sharing the music during a play mode with an external device.

2. Description of the Related Art

Portable terminals typically have an FM receiver for receiving FM (Frequency Modulation) radio broadcast and an FM transmitter for transmitting FM radio broadcast.

The FM transmitter of the portable terminal can broadcast in-play music (or music being played) via a predetermined FM channel (frequency), and can also broadcast Radio Data System (RDS) or Radio Broadcast Data System (RBDS) via the same channel. Hence, the portable terminal serves as an FM radio station using an FM radio chipset capable of performing an FM transmission function.

However, because an FM transmitter of a portable terminal unilaterally transmits FM radio broadcast, the receiving terminal must detect the FM channel of the FM transmitter in order to receive music broadcasted therefrom. Thus, the user is inconvenienced by having to manually tune the FM channel of the FM receiver to the FM channel of the FM transmitter.

SUMMARY

An exemplary embodiment of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and method for playing music and simultaneously share the music with another external device.

According to an aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for playing music includes: a first portable terminal for transmitting Frequency Modulation (FM) channel information of an FM transmitter, which is set to broadcast in-play music thereof, and an FM radio application execution command through near field communication (NFC); and a second portable terminal for receiving the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal through the NFC, executing the FM radio application set by the FM channel information, and receiving and playing the music broadcasted from the first portable terminal.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a method for playing music includes: transmitting Frequency Modulation (FM) channel information of a first FM transmitter, which is set to broadcast in-play music thereof, and an FM radio application execution command from a first portable terminal to a second portable terminal through near field communication (NFC); and upon receiving the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal through the NFC, executing the FM radio application set by the FM channel

information and receiving and playing the music broadcasted from the first portable terminal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other aspects, features and advantages of certain exemplary embodiments of the present invention will be more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a first portable terminal and a second portable terminal according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a flow diagram illustrating a process for playing shared music in the first portable terminal and the second portable terminal according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 3A, FIG. 3B, FIG. 3C, FIG. 3D, FIG. 3E, FIG. 3F and FIG. 3G are diagrams for describing the process of FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Exemplary embodiments of the present invention will be described below in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings. Like reference numerals in the drawings denote like elements. The present invention may, however, be embodied in different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the present invention to those skilled in the art.

As it will be explained in details hereinafter, according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a first portable terminal broadcasts its in-play music and a second portable terminal plays the in-play music of the first portable terminal in a shared manner. However, it should be noted that the teachings of the present invention may also be applicable to external devices (e.g., car audio systems and cassettes) that include an FM transceiver and a near field communication (NFC) unit.

In the embodiment of the present invention, a first portable terminal broadcasts its in-play music and a second portable terminal receives and plays the in-play music of the first portable terminal. However, the present invention may be also applicable to the case where the second portable terminal broadcasts its in-play music and the first portable terminal receives and plays the in-play music of the second portable terminal.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a first portable terminal and a second portable terminal according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 1, a first portable terminal 100 according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention includes a first control unit 110, a first data processing unit 120, a first radio frequency (RF) unit 123, a first audio processing unit 125, a first memory unit 130, a first camera unit 140, a first video processing unit 150, a first display unit 160, a first NFC unit 170, and a first FM transceiver unit 180.

In operation, the first RF unit 123 performs a wireless communication function of the portable terminal. The first RF unit 123 includes an RF transmitter for upconverting and amplifying a transmission (TX) signal, and an RF receiver for low-noise-amplifying and downconverting a received (RX) signal. The first data processing unit 120 includes a transmitter for encoding and modulating the TX signal, and a receiver for demodulating and decoding the RX signal. For example, the first data processing unit 120 includes a modem and a codec. Herein, the codec includes a data codec for processing

packet data, and an audio codec for processing audio signals (e.g., voice signals). The first audio processing unit **125** processes an RX audio signal outputted from the audio codec of the first data processing unit **120**, and transmits a TX audio signal, generated by a microphone, to the audio codec of the first data processing unit **120**.

The first memory unit **130** may include a program memory and a data memory. The program memory may store programs for controlling a general operation of the first portable terminal **100**, and programs for transmitting FM channel information of an FM transmitter, which is configured to broadcast in-play music, and an FM radio application execution command through the first NFC unit **170** to a second portable terminal **200**.

The first control unit **110** controls an overall operation of the first portable terminal **100**.

According to an exemplary embodiment, when the FM transmitter is enabled in a music play mode, the first control unit **110** is configured to broadcast in-play music on the basis of the FM channel information. Herein, the first control unit **110** may be configured to broadcast not only the in-play music but also radio text (RT) information about the in-play music.

Radio Data System (RDS) denotes digital information carried in FM radio transmission standardized by European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Examples of the RDS include Program Service (PS), Alternative Frequency (AF), Radio Text (RT), Travel Announcement (TA), and Traffic Program (TP). The RT is plain text information such as Song Title and Singer Name.

According to an exemplary embodiment, when the FM transmitter is enabled, the first control unit **110** connects to the second portable terminal **200** through the first NFC unit **170** using a NFC protocol and transmits FM channel information of the FM transmitter, which is broadcasting the in-play music, and an FM radio application execution command to initiate the second portable terminal **200** to play the same in-play music using the FM channel broadcast by the first portable terminal **110**.

According to an exemplary embodiment, when a sound mute function is selected for the in-play music, the first control unit **110** controls the first portable terminal **100** mutes its audio output but continue to broadcast the in-play music through the FM transmitter. So that the second terminal **200** continue to play the in-play music broadcast by the first portable terminal **110**.

When music is broadcasted on the basis of the FM channel information of the FM transmitter, the first NFC unit **170** connects to the second portable terminal **200** with a second NFC unit **270** to transmit the FM radio information and the FM radio application execution command to the second portable terminal **200**.

The first FM transceiver unit **180** includes the first FM transmitter and a first FM receiver. The first FM transmitter broadcasts and receives the in-play music of the first portable terminal **100** using a particular FM channel specified in the FM channel information.

The first camera unit **140** includes a camera sensor for capturing video data and converting the video data into an electrical signal, and a signal processing unit for converting an analog video signal, captured by the camera sensor, into digital data. The camera sensor may include a CCD sensor or a CMOS sensor, and the signal processing unit may include a digital signal processor (DSP). Also, the camera sensor and the signal processing unit may be integrated into one unit, or may be separated from each other.

The first video processing unit **150** performs an image signal processing (ISP) operation to display video signals, outputted from the first camera unit **140**, on the first display unit **160**. Examples of the ISP operation include gamma correction, interpolation, spatial change, image effects, image scaling, auto white balance (AWB), auto exposure (AE), and auto focus (AF). The first video processing unit **150** processes the video signals, outputted from the first camera unit **140**, on a frame basis, and outputs the frame video data according to the size and characteristics of the first display unit **160**. Also, the first video processing unit **150** includes a video codec to compress the frame video data displayed on the first display unit **160** and restore the compressed frame video data into the original frame video data. The video codec may include a JPEG codec, an MPEG4 codec, or a Wavelet codec. The first video processing unit **150** may have an on-screen display (OSD) function to output OSD data in accordance with a display screen size under the control of the first control unit **110**.

The first display unit **160** displays the video signal outputted from the first video processing unit **150**, and displays the user data outputted from the first control unit **110**. The first display unit **160** may be implemented using an LCD. If the first display unit **160** is implemented using an LCD, the first display unit **160** may include an LCD, an LCD controller, and a memory for storing video data. The LCD may be a touch-screen LCD. If the LCD is a touchscreen LCD, it may also operate as an input unit. Also, the first display unit **160** may display keys of a key input unit.

Referring to FIG. 1, a second portable terminal **200** according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention includes a second control unit **210**, a second data processing unit **220**, a second radio frequency (RF) unit **223**, a second audio processing unit **225**, a second memory unit **230**, a second camera unit **240**, a second video processing unit **250**, a second display unit **260**, a second NFC unit **270**, and a second FM transceiver unit **280**.

The second memory unit **230** may include a program memory and a data memory. The program memory may store programs for controlling a general operation of the second portable terminal **200**. According to an exemplary embodiment, the second memory unit **230** may store programs for receiving and playing the music broadcasted from the first portable terminal **100**, by executing the FM radio application set by the FM channel information, in response to the FM radio application execution command and the FM channel information received from the first portable terminal **100** connected through the second NFC unit **270**.

The second control unit **210** controls an overall operation of the second portable terminal **200**.

According to an exemplary embodiment, when receiving the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal **100** connected through the second NFC unit **270**, the second control unit **210** executes the FM radio application set by the FM channel information to receive and play the in-play music broadcasted through the first FM transceiver **180** of the first portable terminal **100** through the FM receiver, which is set by the FM channel information received therein.

Herein, according to an exemplary embodiment, the second control unit **210** receives not only the music but also RT information about the music from the first portable terminal **100** through the FM receiver and displays the same on the display unit **260**.

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The second NFC unit **270** connects to the first portable terminal **100** with the first NFC unit **170** to receive the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command.

The second FM transceiver unit **280** includes the second FM transmitter and a second FM receiver. The second FM transmitter broadcasts music on the basis of the FM channel information, and the first FM receiver receives the music, which is broadcasted from the first FM transceiver **180** of the first portable terminal **100**, on the basis of the FM channel information.

According to an exemplary embodiment, the second display unit **260** may display the song title and singer name of the in-play music extracted from the RF information received from the first portable terminal **100**, while the second portable terminal **200** is receiving and playing the music broadcasted from the first portable terminal **100**.

The second camera unit **240**, the second video processing unit **250**, the second RF unit **223**, the second data processing unit **220** and the second audio processing unit **225** of the second portable terminal **200** perform the same operations as the first camera unit **140**, the first video processing unit **150**, the first RF unit **123**, the first data processing unit **120** and the first audio processing unit **125** of the first portable terminal **100**, and thus a detailed description thereof is not provided herein to avoid redundancy.

Now, a process for playing shared music in the first portable terminal **100** and the second portable terminal **200** according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention will be described below in detail with reference to FIGS. **2** and **3A** to **3G**.

FIG. **2** is a flow diagram illustrating a process for playing shared music in the first portable terminal and the second portable terminal according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIGS. **3A** to **3G** are diagrams for describing the process of FIG. **2**.

Referring to FIG. **2**, in step **201**, the first control unit **110** plays the music selected by a user during a music play mode of the first portable terminal **100**.

FIG. **3A** illustrates a music play mode of the first portable terminal **100**, and FIG. **3B** illustrates an operation of playing the music selected by the user in the music play mode of the first portable terminal **100**.

When the first FM transmitter is enabled by the user's selection during the playing of music in step **201**, the first control unit **110** broadcasts the in-play music via the FM channel (frequency) of the first FM transmitter in step **202**.

In step **202**, the first control unit **110** may broadcast not only the music but also RF information about the music on the FM channel (frequency) of the first FM transmitter, and the FM channel may be set by the user.

FIG. **3C** illustrates an illustrative operation of broadcasting the in-play music on a predetermined FM channel (e.g., 89.0 MHz).

When the first portable terminal **100**, which is in an idle state with the first NFC unit **170** initialized, and the second portable terminal **200**, which is in an idle state with the second NFC unit **270** initialized, are touched together or connects via a near field communication protocol, the first portable terminal **100** and the second portable terminal **200** search each other and establish NFC in step **203**.

With the NFC established between the first portable terminal **100** and the second portable terminal **200**, the first control unit **110** of the first portable terminal **100** transmits FM channel information about the in-play music and an FM radio application execution command to the second portable terminal **200** in step **204**.

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FIG. **3D** illustrates an operation of transmitting the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal **100** to the second portable terminal **200** with the NFC established between the first portable terminal **100** and the second portable terminal **200**.

When receiving the FM channel information and the FM radio application execution command from the first portable terminal **100** through the NFC, the second control unit **210** of the second portable terminal **200** executes the FM radio application according to the FM channel information received therein, in step **205**.

In step **205**, the second control unit **210** receives music and RT information about the music, broadcasted by the first FM transmitter of the first portable terminal **100**, through the second FM receiver of the second portable terminal **200** set according to the FM channel information of the first FM transmitter of the first portable terminal **100**, and displays the RT information on the second display unit **260** while playing the music.

FIG. **3E** illustrates a message window that is displayed on the second display unit **260** of the second portable terminal **200** to ask whether to receive and play the music, broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100**, according to the FM radio application execution command received from the first portable terminal **100**.

FIG. **3F** illustrates a process in which, when "Yes" is selected in FIG. **3E**, the first portable terminal **100** broadcasts music through the first FM transmitter while playing the music in a music play mode, and the second portable terminal **200** receives the music broadcasted through the first FM transmitter of the first portable terminal **100** and RT information about the music, plays the music and display the RT information.

When a sound mute function of the first portable terminal **100** is selected while the first portable terminal **100** and the second portable terminal **200** are playing the shared music, the first portable terminal **100** mutes the sound of the in-play music by silencing its speaker but the second portable terminal **200** continue to receive and play the in-play music of the first portable terminal **100**.

In the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the second portable terminal **200** receives and plays the music broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100**. However, any other device(s) having an NFC unit and an FM transceiver unit may also receive and play the music broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100**, so that a plurality of devices can receive and play the music broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100**.

For example, as illustrated in FIG. **3G**, a car audio system **300** having an NFC unit and an FM transceiver unit can receive and play the music broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100** mounted on a supporter in a car. Also, the music can be played with high sound quality by the car audio system **300** when a sound mute function of the first portable terminal **100** is selected by the user. By receiving the FM channel information of the first portable terminal through the NFC unit, the car audio system **300** can receive and play the music broadcasted by the first portable terminal **100**, wherever the first portable terminal **100** is located in the car without being mounted on the supporter or physically connected thereto.

As described above, the present invention provides a music playing apparatus and method in which a portable terminal playing music uses an NFC unit to transmit FM channel information and an FM radio application execution command

to an external device, thereby making it possible to wirelessly share the music with a plurality of external devices without using a physical cable.

Also, the NFC unit is used to share the FM radio channel (frequency) with an external device. Thus, it is not necessary to detect FM radio channel (frequency) information or to manually set a desired FM channel by searching an FM radio application in a top-down manner. Moreover, after the establishment of two terminals, the transmitting terminal can be silenced while the receiving terminal can continue to replay the music. Further, when the portable terminal playing the music is mounted on a supporter in a car, the NFC coverage of the NFC unit is maintained between the portable terminal and a car audio system. Thus, the music transmitted from the portable terminal can be played without the need to connecting a music storage medium (e.g., a USB memory or a CD) to the car audio system.

Note that the above-described methods according to the present invention can be realized in hardware or via the execution of software or computer code that can be stored in a recording medium such as a CD ROM, an RAM, a floppy disk, a hard disk, or a magneto-optical disk or downloaded over a network, so that the methods described herein can be executed by such software using a general purpose computer, or a special processor or in programmable or dedicated hardware, such as an ASIC or FPGA. As would be understood in the art, the computer, the processor or the programmable hardware include memory components, e.g., RAM, ROM, Flash, etc. that may store or receive software or computer code that when accessed and executed by the computer, processor or hardware implement the processing methods described herein.

While the invention has been shown and described with reference to exemplary embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. Therefore, the scope of the invention is defined not by the detailed description of the invention but by the appended claims, and all differences within the scope will be construed as being included in the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
 - obtaining, at an electronic device, a message from another electronic device external to the electronic device via a first communicative connection, the message including information associated with multimedia content being played at the other electronic device;
 - receiving, at the electronic device, using the message, at least one portion of the multimedia content from the other electronic device via a second communicative connection; and
 - playing, at the electronic device, the at least one portion of the multimedia content.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the obtaining is performed in response to the other electronic device being in proximity of the electronic device.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving comprises: identifying channel information from the message; and establishing the second communicative connection based at least in part on the channel information.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the channel information comprises an identifier to be used to couple the electronic device with the other electronic device.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the obtaining comprises: receiving application information corresponding to an application to be used to play the multimedia content.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the playing comprises: executing, at the electronic device, the application based at least in part on the application information.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the playing comprises: presenting, via a display operatively coupled with the electronic device, the at least one portion of the multimedia content.
8. A method comprising:
 - playing, at an electronic device, multimedia content;
 - transmitting, at the electronic device, a message to another electronic device external to the electronic device via a first communicative connection, the message including information associated with the multimedia content being played; and
 - transmitting at least one portion of the multimedia content to the other electronic device via a second communicative connection such that the at least one portion of the multimedia content can be played at the other electronic device.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the playing comprises: receiving the multimedia content from a server across a network.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the multimedia content is received from the server via a communicative connection same as the second communicative connection.
11. The method of claim 8, wherein the transmitting of the message is performed in response to the other electronic being in proximity of the electronic device.
12. The method of claim 8, wherein the transmitting of the message comprises:
 - receiving, via the first communicative connection, a request from the other electronic device to share the multimedia content.
13. The method of claim 8, wherein the transmitting of the at least one portion of the multimedia content comprises: transmitting text information to be used to identify the multimedia content.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the text information comprises at least one of a title of the multimedia content, a name of an author or a performer of the multimedia content, or a service to provide the multimedia content.
15. An apparatus comprising:
 - a memory to store multimedia data; and
 - a controller configured to:
 - obtain a message from an electronic device external to the apparatus via a first communicative connection, the message including information associated with multimedia content being played at the electronic device;
 - receive, using the message, at least one portion of the multimedia content from the electronic device via a second communicative connection; and
 - play the at least one portion of the multimedia content.
16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the controller is configured to:
 - obtain the message in response to the electronic device being in proximity of the apparatus.
17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the controller is configured to:
 - identify channel information from the message; and
 - establish the second communicative connection based at least in part on the channel information.
18. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the controller is configured to:
 - receive application information corresponding to an application to be used to play the multimedia content.

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19. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the controller is configured to:

store the at least one portion of the multimedia content received from the electronic device in the memory.

20. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein at least one of the first communicative connection or the second communicative connection comprises frequency modulation, near field communication, wireless fidelity, Bluetooth, or Zigbee.

21. An apparatus comprising:

a memory to store multimedia data; and

a controller configured to:

play multimedia content;

transmit a message to an electronic device external to the apparatus via a first communicative connection, the message including information associated with the multimedia content being played; and

transmit at least one portion of the multimedia content to the electronic device via a second communicative connection such that the at least one portion of the multimedia content can be played at the electronic device.

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22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the controller is configured to:

receive the multimedia content from a server across a network.

23. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the controller is configured to:

transmit the message in response to the electronic device being in proximity of the apparatus.

24. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the controller is configured to:

receive, via the first communicative connection, a request from the electronic device to share the multimedia content.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the controller is configured to:

identify channel information from the message; and establish the second communicative connection based at least in part on the channel information.

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